

## **FEBRUARY 25, 2008, F.A.H.P. NEWS**

**The Peirsons of Yorklyn:** Ruth Pierson Marshall is an “IE” Pierson from Southwood Road in Hockessin, whereas the Yorklyn family was “EI”. They were probably very distant cousins, related before spelling was as important as keeping alive. For many years, the Yorklyn Peirsons were centered on Benge Road, living in the mill houses now owned by the State, but still leased to NVF Company.

I first remember the brothers Tom and Charlie, both born in the 1870's I should think. Before 1900, there were two long frame houses parallel to Benge Road, each containing three dwelling units and located between the present old brick office building and Auburn Heights. One of these was torn down in 1900 to make room for the Insulite Mill building (the first fiber mill in Yorklyn); the other lasted until the 1970's. In 2/3 of the longer-lasting building lived a number of members of the Peirson family. Tom Peirson and his family lived in the end closest to Auburn Heights. Mrs. Peirson, a member of the World War II sewing group that made bandages for the Red Cross in Auburn Heights' sun porch, was an excellent cook and pie baker. “Old Tom”, then of retirement age, was bent almost double from arthritis, but he kept going and could be quite cantankerous. He often cut through the yard of Auburn Heights and his route took him under the rose arbor in each direction. In trying to figure out where he was going, my guess is that he was sending or receiving a package via the friendly Short Line bus driver, whom he would meet at our front gate. The Peirsons had 3 sons and 3 daughters, two of the latter marrying brothers named Lloyd. The sons, Jack, Jim, and Bill, all worked for National Fibre, although Bill was there very briefly. Jack and Alice, his wife, lived in the center section of this long frame house until they moved into the brick farmhouse at the edge of the Warren Marshall property part-way up the Gun Club hill. He drove a truck for the company, and also was called upon for various extra jobs. Jim moved out some time after he was married, and later lived near Landenberg. He was an auto mechanic and kept the cars and trucks running for NVF, with his small shop having been converted from the blacksmith shop alongside the Insulite Mill. In the early 1930's Jim was quite a sport with his '32 Ford V-8 rumble-seat roadster, which he showed off by speeding around Yorklyn right after the 5 o'clock whistle blew to end the working day. Bill, the youngest of the six, was born about 1922, was married toward the end of World War II, and had two sons, a daughter, and a step-son.

Emma Peirson, the eldest daughter, married Joseph C. “Lum” Jordan, grandfather of our member Jim Jordan, and for at least 25 years they lived in half of the farmhouse across from the Marshall Brothers mill. This was the home of the Israel Marshall family, 1890-1897. The Jordans had two sons and 2 daughters; the boys both worked for NVF. The second daughter, Helen, married Benjamin Lloyd, and they lived in 1/3 of the existing “triple” stone house next to the farmhouse. Later they bought their own home in Whitebriar off Old Wilmington Road.

“Benny” Lloyd looked out for the Lloyd and Peirson families, being a solid citizen and a very generous man. For several years before his retirement, he was superintendent of the Marshall Brothers paper mill. Benny and Helen had two sons, one of whom was killed at an early age. The youngest daughter, Myrtle, married Otto Lloyd, a younger brother of Benny. For several years before and during World War II, they lived with the senior Peirsons, and I can still hear Myrtle calling her very young son who had strayed afar: “Tommie!” I think Otto worked for NVF, but they later rented one of the snuff mill houses near the Yorklyn School. Except for Joe Bird and his family, Barney Miller and his family, John Lloyd, his wife (parents of Benny and Otto), and their younger daughter, and the large Berry family that moved out in the mid-1930’s, the “Marshall Brothers complex” of houses was occupied by Peirsons.

“Old Tom” had a brother Charlie who owned his home on Yorklyn Road almost directly below the present home of Rob and Chevonne Robison. This is the house, built about 1900, that almost fell down, but has been recently restored by Bob Brumbaugh. In his later years Charlie was janitor for the Yorklyn School, and he, too, was a local character. Unable to get along with his wife and 3 daughters, he moved out and occupied an out-building behind the house for the last 20 years of his life. Charlie was not to be outdone. Stopping to chat at Gregg’s Store on his way home from his early morning stint at the school, he would insist the temperature was lower at his place than anywhere else in Yorklyn on a winter morning. It’s my recollection that Tom and Charlie both died in the mid-1950’s. Most of those mentioned are gone today, but many working families like the Peirsons made up the population of Yorklyn 75 years ago.

The Annual Meeting of the *Friends of Auburn Heights Preserve, Inc.* has been moved to the auditorium of the Center for Creative Arts in Yorklyn (the old Yorklyn School), one-half mile down Route 82 from Auburn Heights. It is tomorrow night, FEBRUARY 26, at 7:30 P.M. Following the business meeting, John Iwasyk, a Director of Historic Red Clay Valley, Inc. (operator of the Wilmington & Western R.R.) for 45 years, will treat us to a power-point show on the Red Clay Valley and the railroad. The Work Session in the shop is canceled for 2/26. WE HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING.

The Quarterly Board Meeting of FAHP will be held in the Museum’s Reception Room on Thursday, February 28, at 7:30 P.M. The Mission and Vision sub-committee of the Strategic Planning process is scheduled for 1:30 that afternoon, and the Collections Committee of the Board will meet at 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, February 27, in the FAHP office. There will be a work session on Thursday for those not involved with the Board meeting.

Tom